**Preparing for the Socratic Seminar**

*This sheet is a guide to help you prepare for a successful seminar. Please follow these rules, suggestions, and guidelines carefully.*

**1. Procedure during the Seminar**

a. What **I** will be doing:

i. *I will not be a part of the conversation.* I will be circling outside the seminar, taking notes, watching, and asking an *occasional* question. I may change topics or switch focuses if I feel I need to.

b. What **you** will be doing:

i. *You all will be leading and adding to the conversation.* When someone is talking, you all should look at them. When you are answering questions, you should look at the student who asked the question.

**2. Key Behavioral Aspects in a Socratic Seminar**

These are the essential rules for behavioral during the seminar:

i. All will listen when one person speaks.

ii. Be polite and let others speak—think:

1. Does my point *directly* relate to what was just said?

2. Have I just spoken?

3. Is there someone trying to speak who hasn’t had a chance to speak yet?

iii. Keep an open mind—try out other perspectives you may not have thought of before!

iv. If you disagree, try to use *evidence from the text.*

vi. Be patient—a good rule of thumb is if you’ve spoken 3 times already, wait one minute before trying to speak again.

**3. Key Participation Aspects of the Seminar:**

*These are the ways you can add to the discussion:*

i. Open a discussion with a reaction or interpretation

ii. Affirm a previous comment

iii. Challenge a previous comment

iv. Cite evidence from the text

v. Ask for more information

vi. Test understanding of the text or a previous comment

vii. Define terms

viii. Develop an idea with new material

ix. Clarify differences of opinion

x. Transition to a new or old topic

xi. Summarize a new line of inquiry

xii. Return to points made previously

xiii. Synthesize seemingly unconnected points.

xiv. Create closure/ending to a point.

**4. Assessment on the Seminar**

These are the ways in which I will assess you:

i. I will be watching, taking notes, and possibly asking questions. My notes will comprise your assessment and will be about:

1. how you speak (frequency, tone, length),

2. the quality of the evidence you use,

3. Your behavior and conduct, such as:

a. Tracking the speaker with your eyes

b. Taking notes

c. Avoiding interruption

d. Disagreeing kindly

e. Yielding to others

f. Your use of prepared evidence, and notes

**5. Things to Keep in Mind**

a. You may not have a lot of time to talk—your argument should be *concise,* and your evidence/talking points should be *clear and short.*

b. Be polite, but assertive—you will have to speak at some point, so don’t let everyone talk over you—assert yourself!